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NEWS AND NOTES

THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING

Plans for the fourth annual meeting of the National Council in Chicago are well under way. At 4:30 on Thursday afternoon, November 26, the Board of Directors will meet in the parlors of the Auditorium Hotel, which has again been selected as headquarters. Two hours later, officers, representatives of local associations, and other early comers will eat Thanksgiving dinner together. Afterward there will be several short talks upon matters of vital importance to the Council. The topic will be "Nuts to Crack."

Friday's program will open at 9:30 A.M. with the President's annual address and a symposium on speech training under the direction of John M. Clapp, Calvin L. Lewis, and Thomas C. Trueblood. For this symposium at least one expert of international reputation will be provided. The sections will meet at 2:00 P.M., with chairmen as follows: Elementary, J. W. Searson; High School, E. H. K. McComb; College, Edwin Mims; Normal School, Sarah J. McNary; Public Speaking, Charles H. Woolbert; Library, Delia Ovitz. Among the topics to be considered are "Essentials of Elementary English," "Libraries in the School," "Required College Courses in English," "Standards in Public Speaking." At 4:30 the annual business meeting will take place, to be followed by the annual dinner at six o'clock. At eight o'clock the sections will meet. This is an innovation and will greatly enlarge the opportunity of those belonging to the various groups to come into intimate touch with their colleagues from a distance. The new Board of Directors will meet at 10:00 P.M. for the election of officers.

On Saturday at 9:00 A.M. unfinished business will be taken up, including reports of committees. Two addresses will then be given on topics of interest to all members of the Council.

The Council has at present eleven committees of investigation actively at work, all of which will be heard from during the annual meeting. The chairmen of these committees are as follows: On Scientific Investigation of English, Allan Abbott; On English Work in the First Six Years, J. W. Searson; On the Reorganization of Secondary English, J. F. Hosc; On English in the Country Schools, Walter Barnes; On the Cost and Labor of English Teaching, E. M. Hopkins; On Equipment,

V. C. Coulter; On the Preparation of Teachers for High Schools, F. T. Baker; On the Preparation of College Teachers, J. F. Hosc; On Home Reading, Herbert Bates; On School and College Plays, J. M. Dorey; On Publicity, W. W. Hatfield.

Upon the last-named committee, the Committee on Publicity, will devolve the task of informing English teachers everywhere of the annual meeting of the Council. Let each member leave no opportunity unused. Get an announcement in the next number of each educational journal in your territory. Use the daily and weekly papers. See that lively speeches are made at all educational gatherings, even the smallest. This is to be the year when for the first time we reach the uttermost parts. And don't forget to make it clear that a full report of the proceedings of the Council, as well as many of the papers, will appear in the *English Journal*. By this means every teacher in the country can participate in the activities and partake of the feast.

THE ST. PAUL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

The National Council carried out the program announced for the four meetings to be held in St. Paul during the National Education Association Convention. All of the meetings were well attended and attracted principals and superintendents as well as English teachers. The joint meetings with the Library Department and with the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education brought the Council into fellowship with two organizations whose work is closely allied to that of the Council.

The meeting with the librarians furnished two thought-provoking papers on general topics of the kind that uplifts the English teacher's hands and heartens him for the difficult task of defending the faith that is in him. The discussion of the "Cultural Possibilities of School and College Libraries" by Principal W. B. Owen, Chicago Normal College, set forth clearly a working definition of culture and the relation of books to culture. He pointed out that everyone desires culture, self-improvement, and that the new education must not fail to provide for it. Culture means, first of all, living in the world of men, but it also means living in the world of books, which is an enlargement and extension of the world of men. The library must provide both opportunity and guidance for boys and girls. The most universal and most applicable means of improving one's taste is one's own language and the books written in that language. Another aspect of this same topic was seen in Mr. W. S. Dudgeon's paper on "The Library's Debt to Culture." The highest

function of the librarian is to read and to love the best books himself. He must be sensitively responsive to the best in his environment.

The other topic of the morning touched more closely actual school-room practice, being the presentation of "Successful Experience with Home Reading Lists." Miss Helen M. Baker, of Brownton, Minnesota, told how as teacher and librarian in a small town she had been able to give aid to pupils in the library on Fridays after school. By informal reports upon reading from printed lists furnished by the library she kept in touch with the reading of the pupils. Extra credit was allowed for such reading. Each year the English teachers made a new reading-list from the books which were in the library and which were, therefore, easily and certainly accessible to the pupils. These lists were given out at first with only general suggestions, but later special suggestions to individuals were made in the library. The lists included fiction, poetry, and biography, with the greatest number of titles in the first class. Emphasis was placed on the need of having pupils feel free of compulsion to read the books. The idea of required reports was not popular but better results were obtained by having them. The amount of reading depended upon the ability and need of the class.

An especially practical suggestion was contained in the report made by Miss Minnie E. Porter, of the Kansas State Normal School, of an experiment in home reading that she had carried out with success, aided by Miss Flower, school department librarian in the normal school. Miss Porter furnished the audience with typewritten sheets to illustrate her talk. On these sheets were "A List of Books Recommended by Our Class for Reading by Our Class." Most of the young people in this first-year high-school class were from the country and had little back-ground of reading. Some came from homes where there were genuine scruples against the reading of fiction by young people. The recommendations made by the pupils to each other are the result of four months' use of the books and facilities of the school department of the normal school library. The comments were selected by a committee of the class and were printed verbatim. From what Miss Porter told about the individual children and from the comments it was easy to see that she and Miss Flower had accomplished what all wide-awake English teachers believe in and hope to secure—the fitting of reading to the class and the home environment of the individual pupil. Some of the comments follow.

Four girls recommended *Anne of Green Gables* as a "story of a small girl whose imagination was so great that it sometimes got the best of

her. It is very comical and amusing." *College Years* was recommended by two boys. "Three men on bases, two out, three balls, last half of the ninth inning." *Treasure Island* was recommended by a boy and two girls. "A story of buried treasure and brave men who go to seek it but discover that six-sevenths of the men on board are pirates and bad ones at that." *The Sky Pilot* was favored by one girl whose home was a lonely prairie farm. "About the western hill country and a little girl who always wanted to be outdoors. She loved to drive cattle."

By following the successive recommendations of these boys and girls as they learned to read books, a growing change in their taste may be detected. Miss Porter's report was enthusiastically received.

Another contribution on this topic was a paper written by Mr. Franklin Mathiews, librarian of the Boy Scouts of America. He related that the leaders of the scout movement, in their effort to bring back the spirit of the old home and to magnify the work of the child, had found it necessary to arouse parents to be concerned in the outside activities of the child. These leaders also found that to make their organized work more effective they must influence the home-life of the scouts. Thus came about their offer to parents to furnish reading-lists for individual boys to fit the boy according to an analysis of the boy furnished by the parents. To counteract the influence of the trashy fiction for boys which still exists but disguises its harmful nickel quality under an attractive binding and a higher price, the scout organization has established the *Everybody's Library*, a growing collection of well-selected and approved books, published at the uniform price of fifty cents a volume. The first twenty-five titles are fiction, but the list will grow into other fields. Thus the boy-scout list, selected wisely by experts, can be relied upon by all purchasers, and this list will offer a very successful and practical solution of the problem of a wise selection of home reading procurable at a low cost.

A live discussion of this topic became general and was stopped only by the necessity of an adjournment for dinner.

The reading of the second preliminary report of the Council's committee on the high-school course in English before the joint meeting with the Commission received careful attention. The section on the attainment at the end of the sixth grade was commended for the simplicity and sanity of the suggestions. Questions were asked about the report on the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades—the junior high school. The emphasis on the oral aspects of English and the projects suggested as types for the upper three grades of the high school met with hearty

approval. In the general discussion one superintendent declared that the National Council had taken the lead in the important matter of course-of-study-making. Heretofore superintendents had too often made courses by the paste-and-scissors method. The Council showed the right way by drawing in the teachers in the classroom to help make the course of study. Out of the work of the Council and the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education he expected great good to result for the high schools of the country.

At the Thursday forenoon meeting, Mr. McComb, of Indianapolis, spoke of the "Past and Future of the National Council of Teachers of English." In the short period of its existence the Council has drawn together 1,500 individual members and twenty-five affiliated societies; it has put actively to work many competent committees to investigate vital problems in the English teaching of the country. It established the *English Journal* and has become the clearing-house for the exchange of practical and effective ideas upon the teaching of the mother-tongue. In the future its influence must increase, because the Council is filling a need in the life of English teachers. Instead of interfering with other organizations in the English field, it is aiding all of them. It is pointing the way for the advance movement of English teachers now felt far and wide. Much valuable work is still under way in committees, and the future of the Council is full of promise.

Mr. V. C. Coulter, of the Warrensburg, Missouri, Normal School, spoke on the "Redistribution of the Subjects in the High-School Course." He made a plea for such readjustments as would prevent the duplication and overlapping of courses as seen, for instance, in the case of English history and the history of English literature. Composition needs content courses, and many of these can be secured by the proper redistribution of subjects upon sound pedagogical principles.

A paper that called forth discussion was read by Mr. E. L. Miller, principal of the Northwestern High School in Detroit, on the "Separation of Literature and Composition." When literature and composition are studied and taught at the same time, the teacher is asking the pupil to go in two opposite directions at once. By separating the two, four definite things are gained: (1) both pupil and teacher must do the composition work set down, (2) no pupil can be passed on an average between the two subjects, (3) the failures do over what they need to do over, and (4) there is a gain in speed. This plan allows the making of a definite place in the course of teaching, the unity of the paragraph, for instance; allows also the use of works written today as inspiration for composition.

Mr. Miller maintained that this plan carried out effectively would produce a set of boys and girls who will not tolerate rubbish and in exceptional cases will produce writers. It will do a great educational work in improving the national standard of literary enjoyment. As composition consists of the two processes of gathering ideas and of "getting them across," we must go to literature for the manner of expression and to life for the matter to be expressed. The literary method of imitation must be used, but the models must be graded to suit the pupils and the idea that the aim is not to produce authors must never be forgotten.

The high-school course in English might well be divided into eight units, four devoted to literature and four to composition. In the latter work read books of 100 to 1,000 pages for interpretation and study intensively models of 100 to 1,000 words. By such a plan there will come about a closer correlation of literature and composition than now can exist.

At the close of this address, although the hour for another scheduled meeting had arrived, the company voted to remain to discuss the subject.

Miss Ellen F. Peake, of the Oshkosh State Normal School, opened the discussion. She declared that there is no vital reason for combining literature and composition. The teacher is really burdened with two subjects and both lose when combined. Separated courses do produce graduates who are more proficient in writing. They also allow the selection of models suited to the class and the individual pupil. They make unnecessary the dissection of masterpieces in the literature classes.

In Miss Peake's opinion literature would suffer most by the separation, for the composition teacher would have to be equal to his job. The failures would soon cause a shortage of supply, which would ultimately adjust itself through increased salaries and consequent increase in competent teachers. She preferred a different division of time from that proposed by Mr. Miller.

In the general discussion that followed, the point was made that, as local conditions vary, the division of time might also vary. Miss Baylor, of the Indiana State Department of Education, thought "separation" was the wrong word to use; that "differentiation" more nearly fitted the idea presented. The principle involved could be administered effectively on various time schemes, as was shown by experience recited. Miss Porter illustrated the faulty correlation so often found, where literature and composition are not separated, by presenting a few examples of assignments actually made in classrooms she had visited. For instance, a class reading *Macbeth* was asked to write on the Bacon-

Shakespeare controversy. Another class wrote on "How Does *The Crisis* Apply to the French Revolution?" The evil due to the hodge-podge division of time is suggested by the plight of the class just becoming interested in *Treasure Island* that had to stop to bring in an exposition the next day to be followed by another dip into the novel and then by an oral composition.

At the conclusion of the discussion the idea of separating literature and composition was very generally approved.

At the afternoon sessions the general topic was the "Essentials of the English Course," (1) in the elementary school, (2) in the high school, and (3) in the normal school. Mr. J. W. Searson, of Manhattan, Kansas, speaking on the elementary-school essentials, read the attainments suggested by the English committee on the reorganization of the course of study as possible for the end of the sixth grade, and also what had been found in the outlines for grades I to VI in the courses of 200 towns and cities. As chairman of a committee of the Council to investigate the English course for the first six grades, he explained the methods the committee will use to try to find the language constants for these grades. He laid stress upon three fundamentals in the English work of these grades; (1) becoming reasonably independent in the use of language, (2) securing right habits through practice, and (3) giving evidence of class thinking through clear expression. The aim of the committee is not to present its own views but to show clearly the content and methods which the best experience of the country has approved.

In Miss Porter's discussion of high-school essentials she approached the topic from the point of view of the school as a social institution. In this case the school must give power in the use of speech plus an amount of social responsibility for the use of that power. The newer subjects that have come into the curriculum have taken their place because they mean self-expression for the pupil. In this sense English will stand beside and above them. There needs to be a wide choice of subject-matter, according to the changing needs of adolescents. The teacher needs to be frequently asking, "What am I teaching?" and, "Why am I teaching it?" and then should make the selection suited to the individual child and his sense of social institution. This does not mean to take away the classics from those who can and do enjoy them, but it does mean, by imagining how others feel, to fit the book and the boy together. The expressive function of language is the dominant one. Through the work in grades VII, VIII, and IX, the habit of self-expression must be built into the child. While writing for practical use may not be "soulful

nor fitting the child for heaven," yet under the social conception of the nature of the school and the consequent change in schoolroom practice, it must and will have a place of increasing importance.

Mr. C. R. Rounds, inspector of English in the normal schools of Wisconsin, insisted that the English teacher in the normal school should not forget that it is more important for his pupils—prospective teachers—to know children than to be profound scholars. There is a great practical need on the part of teachers for effective oral English; therefore the normal school should be very specific in such training, which should be given under actual conditions. In a similar way letter-writing should have a large place in the normal-school English course, because of the immediate demand upon a young teacher for the effective use of this form of composition. In presenting the content of the normal-school course there must be sought the mastery of, and teaching ability in, elementary things.

Unfortunately the length of the program cut off the opportunity for discussion. This meeting, at which nearly 300 were present, closed a most successful session of the Council.

E. H. KEMPER McCOMB

MEETINGS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS IN VARIOUS STATES AND ABROAD

The English teachers of Alabama have completed the organization of a state association and launched a vigorous campaign of publicity. Preliminary steps were taken last summer at a meeting held at the Auburn Polytechnic Institute. At a recent meeting in Birmingham in connection with the state educational convention a constitution was formally adopted and officers elected as follows: President, James R. Rutland, of Auburn Polytechnic Institute; First Vice-President, Claude Howard, of Jacksonville; Second Vice-President, Miss Belle Neville, of Mobile; Secretary, Mrs. Sarah E. Luther, of Troy; Editor-Treasurer, C. C. Certain, of Birmingham.

The association announces that it will undertake to make and publish investigations concerning the teaching of English and to co-operate in all possible ways with other similar societies. The first number of the *Alabama English Bulletin* has appeared, to be followed by a second in September, and a special circular inviting the English teachers of Alabama to join the association and to subscribe for the *English Journal* has been widely circulated. Mr. Certain, who is publicity agent for

the National Council, has published lively accounts of the new English movement in the leading papers and is setting a pace that organizers in other states will find it hard to equal. Hats off to Alabama!

The West Virginia Council of Teachers of English met in Morgantown on June 18 in connection with the state education association. The program was as follows: "Present-Day Tendencies in the Teaching of Composition," by R. E. Stauffer, of Wesleyan College, and Minnie J. Merrills, of Academy High School; "Present-Day Tendencies in the Teaching of Literature," by Mrs. A. R. Bourne, of Bethany College, and Mrs. N. R. C. Morrow, of Fairmont Normal School; "The Relation of High-School English to Elementary English," by Mary B. Fontaine, supervisor of English in Charleston, and Willa Brand, of the Clarksburg High School.

The society adopted a constitution and voted to affiliate with the National Council. The following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That we agree with the findings of the Hopkins committee of the Modern Language Association and the National Council of Teachers of English and commend their recommendation that the standard of measurement of work of an English composition teacher should be, not the number of teaching hours, but the number of pupils, and that the average number of pupils for a single teacher should be about 50 for high schools and about 35 for colleges. And we pledge ourselves to approximate this ideal so far as local conditions will warrant.

The first annual meeting of the Maryland Council was held at Ocean City, July 1. The topic for discussion was "Standards of English in the Elementary Grades of Maryland." The present conditions were portrayed with the aid of an exhibit by W. H. Wilcox, of the Maryland State Normal School. The present possibilities were discussed by Superintendent Edward M. Noble, of Caroline County; Superintendent G. Lloyd Palmer, of Frederick County; Superintendent Byron J. Grimes, of Queen Anne County; and Assistant Superintendent John T. Hershner, of Baltimore County. Desirable requirements from the high-school point of view were set forth by Andrew H. Krug, of Baltimore City College, and Clara E. Rose, of Centerville, and the view of the teacher of business English was presented by Nellie E. Walters, of Chestertown. The program closed with a general discussion of plans for the future and of suggestions for extending the influence of the National Council and the *English Journal*.

Montana, too, has an English council. On May 13 representatives from all of the state educational institutions and from several high

schools came together at Missoula and organized the Montana State English Council. Professor George F. Reynolds, of the State University, was elected president; Miss Lucy Carson, of the State Normal School at Dillon, vice-president; and Miss Bessie Dougherty, of Glasgow High School, secretary-treasurer. The next meeting of the council will be held in November in connection with the state teachers' association.

The spring meeting of the Association of English Teachers in the Upper Ohio Valley was held in Pittsburgh on May 16. The program was as follows: "Lyric Poetry in the Mental Life of the School Boy," by Orton Lowe, assistant superintendent of the Allegheny County schools; "Business Letter-Writing": the college view, by William B. Doyle, of the Carnegie Institute of Technology; the business view, by S. J. Stoughton, of the advertising department of the H. J. Heinz Company; and the high-school view, by A. A. Brogan, of the Fifth Avenue High School, Pittsburgh. The program was followed by a luncheon.

Mr. C. D. Koch, state inspector of schools for Pennsylvania, is making earnest efforts to assist the teachers of English in his state. At Altoona on April 18 he held a conference for teachers in the upper elementary and the lower high-school grades, at which questions submitted by the teachers were discussed. He has in preparation a course in English, which will be published in the new high-school manual, to be issued by the state education department at Harrisburg.

A series of educational conferences was arranged as a part of the program of the American Institute of Instruction, which met at Harvard University, July 1, 2, and 3. The conference on English, led by William Orr, agent of the Massachusetts Board of Education, and James F. Hosis, of the Chicago Normal College, was largely attended and exceedingly interesting. Definite reports of new phases of educational experience were given by teachers from the New England states, as well as from North Dakota, Ohio, and elsewhere. It is remarkable with what unanimity teachers in all parts of the country are breaking away from the traditional type of class grind on notes and textbook statements about the art of composition. The need of improving the conditions for work was specially emphasized by several speakers.

A large portion of the time of the twenty-third annual convention of the National Speech Arts Association, which met in Evanston, Illinois, June 29 and 30 and July 1-3, was devoted to the problems of teaching oral English in schools and colleges. The topic on Tuesday was "Oral English in High Schools." This was discussed by James F. Hosis, of the Chicago Normal College; Miss Jessie E. Tharp, of New Orleans,

Louisiana; and Miss Adelaide Steele Baylor, of the state education department, Indianapolis, Indiana.

On Wednesday the topic was "Oral English in Colleges and Universities." The speakers and their themes were as follows: "Coaching v. Instruction," Dwight E. Watkins, Knox College, and R. B. Dennis, Northwestern University; "Problems of Oratorical Composition," Harry B. Gough, De Pauw University, and Louis Eich, University of Michigan; "The Ethics of Public Appeal," Charles H. Woolbert, University of Illinois, and Robert I. Fulton, Ohio Wesleyan University. In addition to the prepared addresses there was much informal discussion and a series of informal conferences on public speaking.

Still another important gathering participated in by English teachers was the thirty-sixth annual meeting of the American Library Association, held in Washington, D.C., May 25-29. Dr. Claxton, of the Bureau of Education, caused to be presented a comprehensive scheme for library extension in rural districts upon which the bureau is working. Mary E. Hall, of the Girls' High School in Brooklyn, offered a report of progress in bringing about co-operation between the American Library Association, the National Education Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Vocational Guidance Association. A joint session of normal and high-school librarians was held, and afterward round tables of the groups separately. Dr. Samuel B. Capen, speaking for Commissioner Claxton, described the library as a laboratory; Dr. J. D. Wolcott, librarian of the Bureau of Education, told how the library of the bureau may serve the schools by sending out package libraries and bibliographies, and in many other ways; Mr. Willis H. Kerr, of the State Normal School at Emporia, Kansas, gave a survey of the school library situation; and Miss Ida M. Mendenhall, of Tompkins Cove, New York, presented a school-library exhibit, which is to be circulated by the Bureau of Education. Valuable papers were read at both round tables and a committee on library training in normal schools was created, of which Miss Lucy E. Fay, of the University of Tennessee, was appointed chairman, and which will co-operate with like committees of the National Education Association and other organizations. Excellent accounts of the American Librarians' Association meeting as a whole will be found in the July numbers of the *Library Journal* and *Public Libraries*. The papers and proceedings have been published as No. 4, Vol. 8, of the *Bulletin of the American Library Association*.